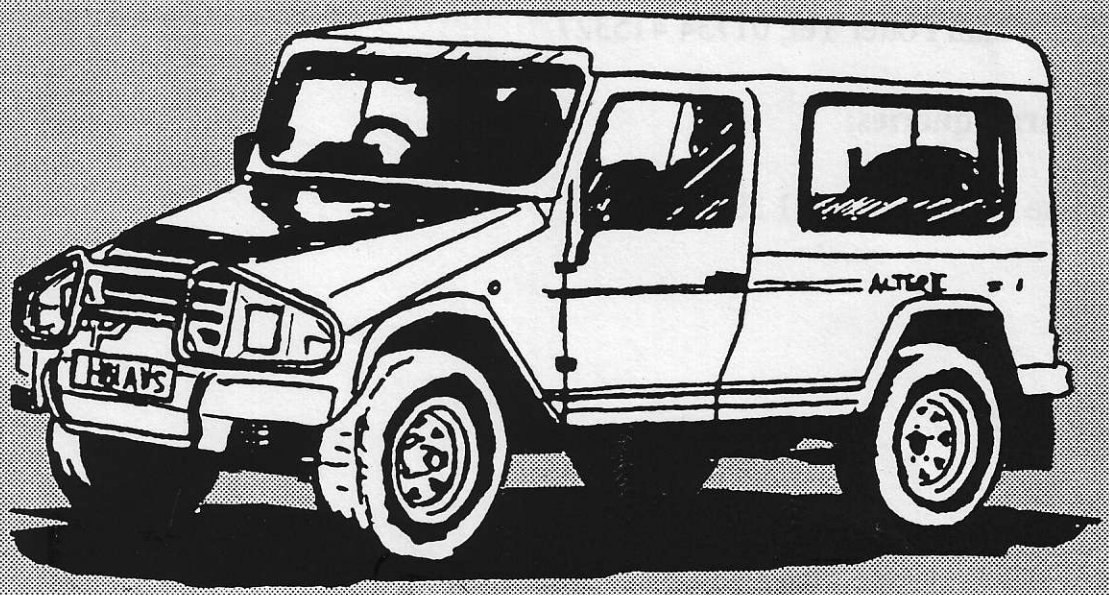
The

Ultimate Motoring Magazine



The Newsletter of the UMM Owners Club (UK)

OCT '95

UMM Owners Club (UK)

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NEWS

SMC are still actively pursuing the Pioneer Project - the UK built UMM. Although they are probably still six months away from any announcement, "slow but sure" progress is being maintained. It is rumoured, that when the detailed plans for the Pioneer get to the drawing board, the UMM Owners Club (UK) will be asked to provide input and recommendations.

On the Portuguese front, there is still some confusion over whether or not the factory has actually started to produce vehicles yet!

And in France, the newly formed UMM Owners Club (France) has been in touch with me asking for help and advice

MEMBERS NEWS

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Bob Jones has now moved out to Portugal. His address is;
Casa do Rouxinol, Cordeiros, Apartado 68, 8375 S.B. Messines
Algarve, Portugal.

In the ten months that he has been there he has used 60 tons of sand, 40 tons of aggregate, 30 tons of rock, well over 100 bags of cement, 3000 tiles (for the courtyard), 125 metres of walling and fencing on his farm house renovation project. Until he bought a tractor, his UMM was supplying all the muscle. Bob's property (about 20 miles inland from the coast) is on the "real Algarve" safari route. On one occasion he counted 21 UMM's taking punters on the cross country trip along a track adjoining his property and along his river bed. He has also been approached by someone trying to buy a UMM since they are also in short supply out there!

Another member who will have moved to Portugal by the time you read this is Haydn Bonadie. His address is; Casa Da Palmeira, Synagoga, 8800 Tavira, Algarve, Portugal. I'll not be at all surprised to learn that he and Bob become friends!

COMPETITION RESULTS

No one entered - no one won!

NATIONAL OFF ROAD AND 4 WHEEL DRIVE SHOW

What a superb weekend! Thanks to the work put in by Graham, we had a most impressive club stand. Graham's caravan and awning was, once again, the "club hut", the area was marked out with UMM bunting (thanks to SMC and Harris-Mayes) and on the Saturday we had six vehicles on the stand, and five vehicles on Sunday. Pip Whiston, Dan Pannet (both

LWB 3 dr Station Wagons), Thomas Sippel-Dau and Les Dufty's (both SWB Station Wagons) joined the SWB Station Wagons of Graham and mine for the Saturday, whilst Geoff Harding (Transcat Station Wagon), Julian Van Geersdale (SWB Station Wagon) and Thomas (again) joined us on the Sunday. In fact Sunday was especially good because Thomas, Geoff and myself went, in convoy, on the superb public off-road course.

The area set aside for club stands was on the hill, overlooking the main arena, so apart from some problems that Graham encountered getting his caravan level on the Friday night, our pitch was perfect and we had a grandstand view of all the events. The weather on Saturday was a mixture of (some quite heavy) showers and hazy sun, which may have put some people off coming to the show. Sunday was a much better day with hot sunshine for most of the time and significantly more visitors.

The National Off Road and 4 Wheel Drive Show really is a superb event. There is so much to see and do that really one day is not enough to see everything, especially if you take advantage of the Public Scenic Route. This gentle, non damaging off road course is over six miles long and has optional "interesting bits". No one need be apprehensive about driving the course and for the more experienced off road drivers (or nutters like Thomas!) there are the interesting bits in which to get really dirty! The route takes between one and a half and two and a half hours to complete (depending on how much traffic is on it at the time - best go early in the morning to avoid queues at the "tricky bits"). I'm sure that the convoy of UMM's seen on Sunday (Thomas, Geoff and myself) was most impressive.

For me though, one of the highlights of the weekend was meeting our members and putting faces to names. I suspect though, that Pip, Geoff, Julian and Dan will have been more surprised, or even shocked, at meeting me for the first time than I was at meeting them!

Again, I thank Graham for doing such a superb job of organising the stand, putting Bev, Sam and myself up for the night and dispensing a none stop flow of tea - many thanks Graham. And now over to Pip Whiston, our roving reporter, for a candid review of the event.

SATURDAY AT THE UMM STAND

When I arrived, the caravan was already in position. I knew it was the UMM stand because of the UMM flag, the UMM bunting and because the stand had been put on the side of a hill. UMM's were the only vehicles that could get and stay in that position!

Graham Potter, well known for his love of the Isetta "bubble" car and of course UMMs, had kindly brought his converted caravan (converted into a mobile garage for his Isetta!). His well trained sons were making tea and the weather looked like it was going to be sunny although we did have the occasional rain shower.

At the beginning of the day we had two short wheel based UMM Alter II's owned by Graham and Glenn (both green), and my white LWB 3 door Alter II. Glenn's UMM had all the bits and pieces done to it that have featured in previous newsletters (I would like to see a wiring diagram for his stereo system - it really was something else!!).

We were soon joined by Thomas and his LHD Alter II, with the new style dashboard attracting lots of envious eyes, and also by Dan, who had another LWB 3 door Station Wagon.

The show itself had a lot going on, but unfortunately it was mainly for Landrovers and their derivatives! There was quite a bit of interest in our vehicles and some old faces from last year turned up. One UMM enthusiast, or rather ex-enthusiast, called in at the stand - Paul Furey. Paul was unhappy about the spares situation, especially track rod ends. His UMM had been off the road for three months because no-one - including SMC, was able to supply the correct parts. All his garage had was an ever increasing pile of unusable steering bits and a very frustrated customer. It was sad to see an owner who obviously liked and used his UMM for what it was built for - work - had to give it up because of being let down by the spares situation. He is now thinking of buying a Japanese 4WD, not because he wants to, but because he has to have a 4WD that is not off the road for three months, waiting for spares. Apparently, his UMM is now sitting in the garage, up for sale, once the spare parts can be found - somewhere in the world!! Isn't it a pity that such a fine vehicle is let down by problems with spare parts. If anyone has an update on a source of track rod ends etc., please let Glenn know.

Towards the end of the day Les, who owns an Alfa Romeo garage in Bristol turned up on foot. When asked "Where's the UMM", he replied "In the car park", indicating the large field on the other side of the show ground, full of 4WDs and lesser cars. Isn't it strange how easily an Alfa Racing Red UMM can be spotted amongst all the other vehicles! Les quickly brought his normally aspirated Alter II onto the club stand. It is the only UMM I have seen with a wood rimmed sports steering wheel. Les told us his UMM was for sale (details elsewhere in this newsletter). By the end of the day we had a total of 6 UMMs, on the stand, together with several empty beer bottles and a pile of used tea bags! (Although I searched for Graham's Isetta I couldn't find it - obviously it was hiding under his UMM!)

Altogether the event was (at least on the Saturday) a great success and it was good to meet voices usually associated with the telephone.

UMM RALLY

During the National Show, several members suggested organising a weekend get together for the purpose of meeting each other and maybe hold some sort of "easy" off road rally or non damaging competition. I think it's a great idea and I am more than happy to organise something - or organise someone to organise something, Pip? My initial thoughts are to hold the event in a location as central as possible to those members attending, so that everyone has about the same distance to travel. The event should take place at a site where members can use their caravans, can camp or be somewhere close to reasonably cheap accommodation. And finally, should be a site where we can set out an interesting driving course. But first of all I need an indication of how many would be interested. Please write or phone and let me know if this is something you want to do. Depending on the response I will get on and organise something, but I really do need an idea of how many members would attend.

PORTUGAL

Graham Potter is very keen to organise a trip to the UMM factory in Portugal. The plan is for a convoy of UMM's to drive down there and back over a two week period in either '96 or '97. If any one is interested, please contact Graham on 01734 415327. (Can you imagine the looks of the dock staff as a convoy of UMMs turn up to board the ferry - you get enough strange looks with just one UMM!)

T- SHIRTS

Another suggestion from the National Show was for club T/Sweat shirts. I can get good quality T/Sweat shirts printed up for £9.40 (sweat shirts) and T shirts for £5.47 (coloured) and £4.82 (white) for a minimum order of 12 (although these prices are now 12 months old). SMC have given the club permission to incorporate the UMM logo so I will produce a design and order form which will be included with the next newsletter.

UMMONYMOUSE - The everyday story of a new UMM owner.

OH TO BUY AN U.M.M. (or ode to an U.M.M.)
by Ummonymouse

There it was - the big white beast. I had finally paid over the cash and in return I had got a de-tuned lorry engine in a stack of RSJs with 4 wheels kept from the RSJs by cart springs. (I quote a friend who saw the vehicle spec!!).

I drove gingerly out of the dealers yard and did a left. Unfortunately I forgot the turning circle isn't the same as a Triumph Herald, which caused me and a large "artic" hurtling towards me on *his* side of the road to think that our end had come. Luckily the sight of the Beast and my white knuckles got all the 10 plus lorry wheels well locked and I graciously thanked the "knight of the Road" for his friendly gesture. I am sure that with normal vehicle jack I could have done what he requested, but the size of the UMM's bottle jack !! My eyes are still watering at the thought of it!

Off we trundled. I became fascinated by the sight of little old ladies taking avoiding action as I was still trying to get used to the width of the vehicle. London Taxi drivers, who are well known for their "proGRESSIVE" driving skills even gave way!! I thought I would go and pick up the kids from school.

My daughter had been quite excited for some weeks. She had told her class that Daddy had spent some of his retirement money on a new car. It was a big secret but she had been assured by my wife "*It was a car Daddy had been wanting for a long time*". When she came out of school with her friends the look on her face was tremendous. I proudly held open the door for her and she jumped in. I went around and climbed into the drivers seat and said over my shoulder "*What do you think of it then Ruth?*" I was surprised there was no reply. I turned around and saw her crouched on the floor. I said "*What are you doing?*" She said "*I'm hiding. What is it Dad? The way you were talking I thought you had bought a Mercedes*

or Bentley. I am so embarrassed". I told her that anyone can buy *those* cars, but I bet her no other parent at her school had one of these. The reply was sufficient to make her lose one week's pocket money.

Feeling slightly deflated I went to pick up my son James. He rushed out shouting "*Great Dad! Where's the camouflage and guns?*" I pointed out that the point of getting the UMM was so I could take heavy loads from England to France and back. He wasn't listening. He was trying to pull off the grab handles and asking where the ladder was, so he could climb into the cab (he is only 7 years old). He was exploring the car and making all the right noises a new UMM owner likes to hear. None of this derogatory claptrap I had received earlier. Off we drove, James in the back. We went over two small pot holes and I heard a little voice saying "*Dad, I feel car sick*".

My wife was a bit more composed when I picked her up. She climbed up into the passenger side.
"*When am I going to drive this?*" she asked.
"*I've got you on the insurance*" I replied, hoping that would keep her happy.
"*Typical. You've had me on the insurance of every other car you've bought but so far that is as far as I get*".
"*We will see*" I said, at the same time thinking - This is twice the size of the other cars, she hasn't a hope in hell!!

I then realise that she is still holding her handbag on her lap. I have just bought a vehicle that has a 121" wheel base and enough room in the back to hold a dozen sacks of potatoes, and she sits there with her handbag *on her lap*. I suggest there might be room in the back for her handbag but I can see she is still smarting at my selfishness in not letting her drive. "*Get off!*" she says as my left hand reaches over towards her knee. I try to explain that I was trying to change from 1st to 2nd gear and that long wiggly thing sticking out of the floor on her side was the Portuguese version of a gear lever.

"*I can't hear the radio*".
"*Can you get Atlantic 252?*"
"*Do we have to sit sideways?*"
" *We just ran over snail Dad. I felt every bump of its body*".

Comments fly from all sides. I drive on thinking I had promised myself I wouldn't get another car until the engine of this one was knackered. It has 96,000 miles on the clock and I have another 200,000 to go. I am really looking forward to it.

To be continued . . . . . .

FROM POTTER'S PEN

Rumble rumble roar and grumble,
how does your Transcat go?
- not very fast!

Smoothly softly glide and whisper,
how does your Alter go?
- F A N T A S T I C!

Have you met our chumm
Who bought an UMM
Everyone said "how dumm to buy an UMM"
This made our chumm, who bought an UMM, ever so glumm

And so our chumm, who bought an UMM, who was ever so glumm, sold his UMM.

Now our chumm, who sold his UMM, was <u>really</u> glumm.

Then things did alter when he bought an Alter.
Now he will <u>never</u> be glumm, with his brand new UMM

PARTS UPDATE

TRANSCAT CLUTCH

In the Alternative Parts Guide, I mentioned that the Transcat clutch was a Landrover series III clutch. Well I was almost right! The part numbers are;

Clutch plate FRC 2297 (Landrover series III petrol)
Clutch cover FRC 571228 (Landrover 101)
Release bearing is LUK, part number to follow

ALTER II PARTS

Saul Woolf has left SMC Bristol. Before he left he was trying to locate the manufacturers of track rod ends, top and bottom ball joints and hand brake cables. The current situation is a bit unclear. John Murray is now looking after parts at Bristol. He can be contacted on 0117 953 2758 (note the new number) for details and discounted costs for club members.

ALTER II Tdi CLUTCH

SMC reckon that the Alter II turbo clutch lasts between 60,000 and 80,000 miles. In fact

they are unaware of a clutch lasting longer than 80,000 (if you know differently, let me know). Early symptoms of a worn out clutch are difficulty in engaging first and reverse and a "click" from the clutch area when operating and releasing the clutch pedal (most audible when engine is ticking over). Clutch replacement is easiest if the gear boxes are removed - do not take the engine out!

Alter II turbo clutch kit is LUK part number 6241237000

LOWLOC

As confirmed at the National Off Road Show by Bob Christie of BJ Acoustics, the UMM version of the Lowloc is available to club members for £99.00 (including VAT) plus p&p for mail order. Contact BJ Acoustics on 0161 627 0873.

ECOFLOW

Also at the National Off Road Show, I was given an elementary lesson in practical physics as applied to the infernal combustion engine by club member Geoff Harding. Apparently, things combust (techno talk for explode) more efficiently if all the molecules are charged positively (he could have said atoms or ions, I really can't remember, I mean it was a hot day and it got sort of complicated). Anyway, the atoms or whatever, in diesel and petrol, are randomly charged either negatively or positively. Now, apparently, if all the atoms are charged positively, then you get less harmful exhaust emissions, more torque, a quieter engine and more MPG. It's quite obvious really...

The Ecoflow device, is an encapsulated, powerful, strontium magnet (not suitable for owners with pacemakers apparently!). Placing the magnet over the fuel pipe temporarily charges all the atoms positively, therefore creating the claimed benefits.

Having heard and read of these claims before, I probably had a rather sceptical expression on my face. However, not to be put off, Geoff gave me a small black widget and told me to, "clamp it to the fuel pipe as close as possible to the injector pump. Keep it for a couple of months, then report back on any improvements and, if you are happy that it works, I'll sort out a price for your club members".

Well it's been on now for some 4,000 miles over a three month period. The first thing I noticed, even before checking my fuel consumption, was how much more responsive the engine was. It's just as if I'd had the engine tuned. The mid range power in particular has improved as well as more flexibility at around the 65/75 mph area. The engine is also much quieter. But what about the MPG?

I calculate my MPG over a two week period of driving back and fore to work (a round trip of 24 miles), which usually takes 40 litres of fuel. The route is a mixture of local commuter crawling (about 2 miles) country lanes (about 2 miles) and fast A roads (about 8 miles at around 50/60 mph), in each direction. (I fill up the tank when the needle drops to "0" on the gauge and it usually takes about 40 litres to fill up again).

Prior to removing the mechanical fan (and fitting the Kenlows) I was getting 250 miles to 40 litres of diesel. With the mechanical fan removed, my MPG improved to 280 miles to 40 litres. With the Ecoflow fitted I'm now managing 300 miles to 40 litres - an additional 50 miles per tank of diesel. For a full comparison, I replaced the mechanical fan and my MPG dropped to 280 miles per 40 litres. So even with the mechanical fan fitted an extra 30 miles per tank can be achieved - the equivalent of a free gallon every time you fill up.

As one motoring magazine said, "I don't know how or why it works, but it does".

Geoff can be contacted on 01635 865001 (after 7pm) and the cost to UMM Owners Club members is £49.99 (includes VAT but not postage).

SUNROOF

Having seen Les Dufty's superb Alter II with a fitted sunroof, I decided I wanted one (sunroof that is). I had previously thought, that due to the raised sections that stiffen the roof, fitting a sunroof would be impossible. Obviously it was very possible. Then I received a photo of Bob Branton's Alter II and guess what? It had a sunroof! So, I started to obtain quotes from various local sunroof companies. Most said, "No way", due to the stiffeners. However, one company recommended a specialist in Newcastle (under Lyme) who would "fit a sunroof to anything".

I phoned up, explained about the stiffeners, and they said "No problem". Well, I made an appointment, took a day off work, and drove down to Newcastle. He took one look and said, "No way, sorry mate, can't be done". (Actually, he said "Finikellmeducks, serry, khentbedoinit, ribbsyuhsee, khentdoit" - that's Potteries speak).

Having now seen two UMM's with fitted sunroofs, I tried to tactfully explain that it could be done, but he still refused. So, armed with the knowledge that it could be done, coupled to the overwhelming drive that I WANTED ONE, I bought the component parts off him for £65.00 plus VAT. (He had previously quoted double that for fitting one!).

The sunroof kit comprises of;

- An outer frame
- An inner frame
- The glass bit
- Some nice flock coated rubber stuff that trims off the inner frame and makes it look a really nice job
- A bag of self tapping screws and a roll of black sticky stuff
- A bit of paper with a drawing of a hole on it - the "template"

We then stopped off for lunch in a country pub to read the fitting instructions and plan the job.

The next day saw the UMM parked around the back of the house with a step ladder alongside in order to get onto the roof to start marking out. The first thing is to bin the template that comes with the sunroof. It is a piece of thin paper that has been folded about 100 times and is next to useless. The second thing to do is to decide where the forward edge of the hole is to be.

This is best done by measuring back from the front roof gutter the appropriate distance and placing pencil marks approximately where you want the line. You then run some wide (2") masking tape over the pencil marks the width of the roof between the outer stiffeners. You then measure back from the gutter again, this time placing two pencil marks on the masking tape. You then get a long straight edge, and draw a line across the roof on the masking tape.

You then need to VERY ACCURATELY measure the width and length of the inner flange (the bit that goes THROUGH the roof) of outer sunroof frame. You now measure back from the first line, the length of the flange, place pencil marks, stick down masking tape, re-measure and draw your second line with the straight edge. You can then very easily calculate a centre line by measuring between the two inner roof stiffeners and marking the half way point. You can now, knowing the centre line, repeat the whole process for the width of the flange. You should finish up with a rectangle of masking tape on the roof with a pencilled rectangle marked on it.

(Please note, for this job I have used the UMM's roof dimensions to dictate what is length and what is width. Therefore, the sunroof's length is the shorter of the two dimensions).

The next job is to place the outer frame on the pencil marks in order to double check that the dimensions are correct. Provided everything looks ok, you should now place some masking tape on the inner corners of the rectangle marked on the roof and using the FLANGE of the outer frame, mark out the curved corners of the flange onto the masking tape.

You are now very nearly finished the marking out stage. A good quality, new, metal cutting blade in a jig saw will cleanly cut through the roof lining. However, the drill for the pilot hole will pull and tear the roof lining. So, you need to mark a point on one of the inner raised stiffeners where you intend to drill the hole, about two inches in from one of the pencil lines, and measure the distance from the roof gutter. Then, measure the same distance inside the roof, and carefully cut back the roof lining with a sharp knife, and then drill the pilot hole from the roof (rather than from inside - if your measurement was wrong it's better to rip the roof lining rather than have your pilot hole in the wrong place!

Having said all that, I found drilling the pilot hole the hardest part, if I had got anything wrong, that hole was the no turning back point.

Next, armed with a tin opener (electric jig saw and a new blade) the rest is easy. You need to support the section you are cutting out from inside (watch that blade) otherwise the weight will cause the metal to bend. You can then see that the roof is, in fact, galvanised.

Next is the tricky bit. Trying the outer frame for size, you will find that it sits on top of the two inner stiffeners. Carefully mark the stiffeners in order that they can be cut back to enable the outer frame to sit flat on the roof.

All masking tape should now be removed.

I then filled the exposed stiffeners with glass fibre filler in order to close them and stop rusting. All freshly cut metal edges should then be painted with zinc rich primer, or something similar.

I then binned the roll of black sticky stuff that the instructions recommend you use to make the job watertight. I used a tube of white silicon sealer applied with a mastic gun. Firstly applying a really good dollop all around the outside of the flange, so that when the outer frame is pressed down onto the roof, a good seal is created between the outer frame and the roof. And just to make sure the whole thing would be COMPLETELY watertight, before offering up the inner frame, I applied a second coat of sealer between the flange and the inside of the roof/roof lining - this thing will not leak!

The inner frame is then offered up to the outer frame and bolted together with the self tapping screws. The inner frame actually clamps to the outer frame, sandwiching the roof tightly between the two frames. Once all screws are tight, the excess sealer can be cleaned off the outer frame, where it had been squashed out by the tightening process. Finally, the nice flock coated rubber trim stuff is fitted to the inner frame as per instructions. And really finally, the glass bit is located into the outer frame and you can stand back and admire your new sunroof and congratulate yourself on saving around £60.00 fitting charge.

And absolutely the final thing is to touch up with white paint the glass fibre filler used to seal the edges of the stiffeners.

The difference it makes inside is amazing, it seems much lighter and airier and driving around with the glass removed is very nice indeed.

OFF ROADING

Following my clutch replacement, some friends and I, (Suzi and a series III) went into North Wales to try it out. Apart from the clutch being perfect and the gearchange a lot lighter, we had a great time.

We successfully completed a track that had, on several previous occasions, beaten us. This track is basically an old drovers track across a peat bog and most of the time is far too wet to drive for any distance. However, following the recent heatwave, it had dried out sufficiently to let us drive to the end. The track actually continues, around the head of a glaciated valley, over a mountain pass and down into the next valley. The problem being the vicious side slope which makes it impossible to drive any further than where we stopped for a picnic. And what a picnic. High up in the Berwyns, the views were superb, the hot sun being tempered by a cool mountain breeze.

We continued our day in the hills by driving the Wayfarer Track. At the highest point (where tradition says you have to sign a log book, or roam the hills forever!) we stopped for a coffee. We were admiring the views when a convoy of 4 wheel drive machines trundled slowly past, led by the inimitable Richard Walsh (of 4X4 Funday fame). He was leading the Dragon Safari, for which, each driver in the convoy had paid £85.00 for the pleasure of doing exactly what we were doing for free! It wasn't even difficult, I mean, there was even a Ford Maverick in the convoy!

GLASS; It is probably worth mentioning here that although I do not go "green laning" that often, I do enjoy driving tracks in the hills of North Wales and the Yorkshire Dales. Together with the three people that I usually drive with, we always check the status, and therefore the legality, of the tracks before we drive them. We also belong to GLASS, the Green Lane Association. GLASS promotes the safe, responsible driving of these tracks and tries, via the promotion of a responsible attitude towards both the legality of the tracks and other user groups, to counteract some of the bad press recently directed at this (completely legal) activity.

SPAIN

For some reason, no one in our caving club (apart from ourselves) were having any holidays this summer. So Bev and I planned a trip which started in Spain and continued via the Pyrenees and the Alps back to Calais. We used the Portsmouth/Bilbao ferry to reach Spain, then drove west to Fuente De in the heart of the Picos de Europa range of mountains. Whilst I have written previously about driving tracks in France, driving tracks in Spain is something else.

First of all, you need the 1:50,00 scale Miguel Adrados maps of the Picos. These are available locally in Spain, or mail order from Standfords in London (the better option, since you can do some planning prior to the trip).

There are only two types of road marked on the map. "Red" roads and "white" roads. They are both roads in all senses of the word, the only difference is that the red ones are covered in tarmac and the white ones aren't.

In fact, you don't even need four wheel drive for these tracks, although high ground clearance removes the need to worry about some of the ruts encountered and a low range box helps on some of the steeper sections.

Our holiday was planned to link in with British caving expeditions in the Picos, Matienzo (near Santander) and the Pyrenees. We also like to do some walking whilst on holiday so we didn't have enough time to drive all the tracks that are marked on the map. But based at Fuente De, there is a track that takes you over to the main road to Cain (for the Cares Gorge) that probably saves about 3 hours driving and from Espinama, there is a track that takes you right through the Picos, picking up the main road to Cavadonga, saving, probably about 4 hours driving. Both these tracks are easy to drive but are right in the heart of the mountains which are absolutely breathtaking.